

**REPORT FROM A FACT FINDING/ASSESSMENT MISSION  
TO THE PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA  
NOVEMBER 7-11, 2005**

**I. Objectives**

The main objective of the mission was to respond to the request of NDI regarding possible activities to support the Parliament of the Republic of Moldova. Main issues to discuss and evaluate:

- The need and feasibility of reforms in the parliamentary administration
- The place and the role of the information and analysis services in the parliament
- The structure and administration of the parliament
- The openness and transparency in the parliamentary work
- The needs of parliamentary staff to make their work more efficient and transparent
- The possibility of international cooperation between staff members of Moldovan parliament and other parliaments, particularly Latvia and Lithuania.

The mission was intended to serve as a catalyst to the staff of the Parliament of Moldova to identify areas of deficiency and to start to develop the strategy aimed on improvement of the capacity of existing structures. Ms. Mariana Zolotco, Councillor to the Chairman of the Parliament and Ms. Stella Jantuan, Head of the Information, Analysis and Forecast Service were entrusted by the Speaker with central role in those developments. As a result both key persons were in the focus of our working program and we had several meetings with them.

**II. Observations**

The 101 members of Parliament are supported by 195 staff members, working in parliamentary factions, 10 standing committees (each committee has 3 – 4 consultants) and central administration, called “Apparat”. It has the following units:

- Legal Department
- Parliamentary Documentation Department
- Administrative Department
- Information, Analysis and Forecast Service
- Audiences and Petitions Division
- Department of Inter-Parliamentary Relations
- Press Service
- Counselors of Speaker and vice-Speakers

Theoretically the Apparat is headed by the Director General, but since spring this position is vacant. Some interviewed staff members consider that such position is not necessary, at least now. However from discussions with staff members from different structural units it is evident that there is deficiency of interdepartmental coordination and planning, even lack of information about procedures and developments within the parliament.

Definitely, there is a potential to develop better understanding of democratic tradition, rules and procedures. Staff training programs should include basic courses on state administration principles, particularly on separation of powers in the parliamentary republic, the role and functions of the parliament. Better understanding and support of those principles at all levels

of staff would lead to the implementation of parliament's oversight over the executive branch and improved communication with the public.

To achieve appropriate collaboration between the departments of the parliament and to set and follow appropriate standards, the (non-existing) Head of Staff should meet regularly with the heads of different departments and divisions. It is important to communicate mission and vision, objectives and goals and to work on strategy for parliamentary development at large and in details.

#### *Meetings with Deputy Speakers of the Moldovan parliament*

Meeting with Ms. Maria Postoico, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament. She stressed how important it is to have professional staff within the parliament. Training of the staff especially for those who work with legal acts is obligatory.

Meeting with Mr. Iurie Rosca, MP, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament (his Advisor Ms. Monica Babuc assisted). Deputy Speaker focused on the needs of the Moldovan Parliament (to have more/better):

- Computers in offices
- Personal assistants for MPs
- Resources (cars, fuel) for MPs to travel around the country to meet the electorate
- Library resources

#### *Legal Department (24 staff)*

Meeting with Mr. Ion Creanga, Director of the Legal Department and Ms. Svetlana Cicati, Head of Section of the Legal Department.

The main task for this department is to provide expert opinions on all draft bills. Upon request of leaders of the parliament, the specialists of this department are drafting laws.

The specialists of this department have had chance to attend several international seminars, but they expressed the need for language courses and training about EU legislation and procedures.

#### *Parliamentary Documentation Department (40 staff)*

Meeting with Mr. Maxim Ganaciuc, Head of the Parliamentary Documentation Department.

This department is responsible for taking records (shorthand) of the plenary meetings, for translating and editing of parliamentary documents and stenograms (shorthand records) (Romanian-Russian and Russian-Romanian), processing documents on the demand of MPs and keeping record of all documents passing in and out of parliament.

Specialists from this department keep the register of draft bills (only on paper, no electronic database exists).

Mr. Ganaciuk as the Deputy Director of the Apparat has attended several annual meetings of Association of Secretaries General of the parliaments (organization within International Parliamentary Union).

#### *Division of Interparliamentary Relations (6 staff)*

Meeting with Ms. Rodica Iovu, Head of the Division of Interparliamentary Relations and Acting Head of the Division of Interparliamentary Relations.

Main task for division is to support all permanent delegations to different international organizations (IPU, European institutions etc.) and parliamentary visits to other countries (preparing programs, briefing materials etc). Ms. Iovu serves as well as Moldova's Correspondent to European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation (ECPRD).

This division is part of the Department of Foreign Relations, where two more units are incorporated - Protocol Sector (2 staff) and Interpreter Section (4 staff). Since spring 2005 the position of the Head of Department is vacant.

Specialists of this division coordinate their work directly with the Speaker. Speaker also decides about staff members' trips to ECPRD conferences and other study visits for staff.

One of the few units of those seen where computers are really used. All of them are donated by different countries at different times (UK, France, China) and that can cause problems when/if the local area network with common databases is be created. The database containing reports from MPs and staff about their visits could be useful for the work not only of this department, but for the whole parliament (one potential source on the intranet).

Expressed the need for a scanner and a copying machine (Xerox).

#### *Audiences and Petitions Division (6 staff)*

Meeting with Maxim Jicul, Head of the Audience and Petitions Division and Ms. Svetlana Nunu, Senior Referent.

The work of Audiences and Petitions Division is matching with the respective legal provisions and traditions of Moldovan parliament. Processes ca. 4000 petitions per year, 20% of them are about improvement of legislation; provides the consultations on the phone. Every Friday Speaker or Vice Speakers give an audience to people, that process is managed by the division's staff. Since 2005 they have a local area network with 6 PC (old!!) and a specific application program, created by company "Master". Had no special training, just learned by doing.

Could be used as a model for other units – how to realize and implement small size IT project. Ms. Svetlana could be good promoter.

#### *Information, Analysis and Forecast Service*

Meeting with Ms. Stella Jantuan, Head of the Information, Analysis and Forecast Service and other employees of this service

In the old structure of the Apparat information and Research service was incorporated into the Parliamentary Research and Public Relation Centre. This Centre has been divided into three separate services:

- Information, Analysis and Forecast Service
- Press Service
- Division for the Audience and Petitions

Information Analysis and Forecast Service has 8 employees (Head of the Service, 4 researchers, 2 librarians, 1 ICT specialist). This service is rather new and it's trying to find it's place in the structure of the Apparat. In discussions with Ms. Stella Jantuan, Head of the Information, Analysis and Forecast Service and her staff we have learned about very ambitious plans and mission for the future (to provide impact analysis on legislation, to prepare different strategies and forecasts for Speaker and parliament etc.). They think that the consultants in the committees should provide such trivial stuff as requests from MPs, comparative studies. The service is also responsible for public relations, but Ms. Jantuan stressed that this is the task for future when they will have more human resources (staff).

All staff members expressed the need for additional staff, PCs, intranet and more efforts and understanding from other structures of parliament.

### *Library*

Parliamentary library is a part of the Information, Analysis and Forecast Service. It is very small reference library with rather poor and out-of-date collection. Complete works of Lenin, Marx and Engels, and even Stalin as well as shorthand accounts of all the Congresses of Communist party of the USSR occupy central space and constitute about a half of the library's resources. Library has no money for new acquisitions; it mostly depends on donations and library exchange. The main donors are the French Cultural Centre and the Russian Duma. There is no electronic catalogue and only one database – Moldovan legislation (Moldlex).

Librarians expressed the need for software for library catalogue, new PCs, scanner, copying machine, more space for collection, but most of all – the possibility to update the library collection.

*As library mostly relies on increasing amounts of internet information, advanced training to library staff to show different search engines, browsers, and relevant websites and search strategies is necessary. Access to information in official EU databases, ECPRD is necessary as well.*

*Regular allocated resources for acquisitions – books, periodicals, databases are needed.*

## **III General comments and recommendations**

1. The institutional development of Moldovan parliament should be managed in context of the politicians' determination to move towards European integration. Two important tasks

should be taken into consideration - approximation of the national legislation to the Acquis Communautaire and the necessity to win over Moldovan people for European integration.

*In order to accomplish the first task specific knowledge on EU structure, functions, legislation, procedures etc. will be needed, therefore seminars, workshops, study visits are required both for MPs and staff.*

2. To get the Moldovan people on board for integration in EU, it is important to communicate with citizens about this issue, but first parliament should bridge a more general gap between the state and the individual. Providing NONPARTISAN information to the public about the work of the parliament (general information, plenary, minutes, drafts, laws, committee work, etc.) can help to diminish the existing distrust of the government.

*Some structure should be responsible for working towards society – perhaps, Press service. Organized visits to parliament building, leaflets or other printed materials, user friendly website etc. need some allocated financial resources from parliamentary budget. Staff training and study visits can help to develop strategy for work towards society.*

*Putting laws on the parliamentary website do not need big additional expenses, but could be a real effort of bridging gap between parliament and society.*

3. Civic society (NGOs, professional organizations, local government) could be a positive resource enhancing legislative process (experts, public hearings, and open discussions). Speaker is going to sign Memorandum on cooperation between Parliament and public.

*Perhaps, NDI should pay attention to involvement of NGOs and cooperation of parliament with civil society. NGOs could be used for outsourcing of analytical work.*

4. Discussions with different staff members revealed some areas/problems that in their views must be developed and/or improved. Almost all of them raised the following aspects:

- Lack of computers
- Lack of parliamentary intranet
- Lack of language skills
- Lack of knowledge about work of parliaments in different countries
- Lack of information and comparative analysis.

*It is important to find resources to improve all mentioned above problems. Perhaps, the language courses and study trips to similar size parliaments, like Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Nordic countries are the easiest things to start with.*

*To create intranet with the content that could be attractive for non-experienced parliamentary users – agenda, drafts, with the prospect of creating a web-based legislation tracking system.*

5. Support in institutional capacity building is crucially important.

*It should focus first on the basic things:*

- *General functioning of the parliament with a prospect to become independent, proactive and transparent; functions and priorities of the parliament should be clearly defined and communicated within the parliament;*
- *The structure and functions of each internal unit should be revised (some interviewed consider that structure is irrational and too much concentrated on formal functions)*
- *Staff evaluation, recruitment and training. Current policy that staff members have fixed-term (4 years for general administration) contracts, non-existent human resource development strategy undermine the parliamentary work;*
- *IT, computer literacy –special evaluation of the current situation and strategy for the future is necessary;*
- *The ability to read international documents and information in English is important for both members and staff.*